

Environmental & Energy Insights

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Adaptation: The Future of Climate Change

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For those who believe in Climate Change, there is news: True to its word, the Union of Concerned Scientists has published *Cooler Smarter: Practical Steps for Low-Carbon Living*, a guide examining which green actions make the most difference. How important is it to turn off the lights? According to these environmentalists, not very. The vast majority of the green advice you'll read? Nothing more than nice gestures; perhaps a little better than the alternatives.

According to their research, when it comes to climate change, there are four primary activities that dump carbon into the atmosphere:

- traveling from place to place;
- keeping buildings at pleasant temperatures;
- creating electricity;
- and raising animals for meat.

These conclusions raise some disturbing questions for those who believe in Climate Change. Cap and Trade? Energy from solar and wind power? Nothing seems to be working. And indeed, with China, India and other underdeveloped countries yearning to have a standard of living commensurate with ours, it's almost a moot point to consider what we should do if the largest populations in the world are not on board. Even in the United States, environmental groups were angered and frustrated by Obama's decision in September to postpone indefinitely a regulation to tighten ozone standards.

Perhaps the answer is adaptation. This is not a new idea, but maybe a little more energy and money should be devoted to answering some very basic questions. How do we keep our water supply intact? How do we keep our coastal cities from flooding? What are going to be the biggest issues and how can they be fixed?

There is a silver lining. For those who believe there will be major problems, consider the new business opportunities arising due to climate change. In the next ten years, it is possible that one of the new approaches to climate change will be about adapting to it. If so, we can expect significant business investment in that nascent arena as well.